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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews some major lessons learned by participants in the Follow Through programs about the process ofimplementing innovative educational programs and outlines how these lessons were recorded and formulated for use by others. Using a perspective and method derived from anthropology and oral history these program aspects are described: parent participation, sponsorship, planned variation within the program, research and development, and trust and cooperation among sponsors, directors and teachers;. Research procedures included data collection methods and organization of data. Data included taped interviews, and notes taken during field visits, group seminars and interviews. (Author/SB)

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PRINCIPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION: THE LESSONS OF FOLLOW THROUGH

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INTRODUCTION

In the federal Follow Through program which began in the late 1960's, nationally prominent educators and local community persons have been working together to translate theoretical concepts about early school learning into operational procedures that have to work in the practical world of public education. These several years of experience constitute a unique resource for advancing the understanding of what it takes to implement innovative educational programs in American schools. Documentation of what has been learned in Follow Through about the process of educational change is an important step in making it possible for others interested in improving educational practices to draw on this knowledge.

The Follow Through program has a number of features that make the lessons learned from its experiences especially valuable to document. One of these is parent participation, which helps link the schools to the home and the broader community. Another feature is "planned variation," which means that a wide variety of educational approaches is represented in Follow Through, and in comparing these it is possible to discern general rules or principles of implementation that hold across diverse educational philosophies, practices and local circumstances. Participating local communities are located throughout all the states in widely differing ethnic, cultural and geographic settings. Another feature of Follow Through is the commitment of the funding agency, the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), to a longitudinal research and development effort in which the sponsors of various educational approaches have been in continual interaction with the same local schools for up to seven years, which provides a considerably different time frame for looking at educational change than the more typical one-year project. The fact of a long-term relationship emphasizes the importance of an innovative process that is

based on a mutually supportive two-way flow of information and influence between sponsors and the local communities, so that the lessons learned are rooted in the pragmatic setting of the public school as well as in the scholarly traditions of inquiry.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. One is to highlight some of the major lessons learned by participants in the Follow Through program about the process of implementing innovative educational programs. The second is to outline how the lessons were recorded and formulated. This two-fold purpose should make it possible for others to draw on the lessons themselves as well as on the method by which the lessons were formulated. This paper is not so much a "how to do it manual," as it is an attempt to suggest some perspectives and points of view that grew out of the Follow Through experience that could be useful to others engaged in educational undertakings of their own.

WHAT IS FOLLOW THROUGH?

Follow Through is a federally funded educational intervention program designed to help children of poverty in their first years of formal schooling, grades K-3. The name "Follow Through" is derived from the program's relationship to "Head Start." Both the Head Start and Follow Through programs grew out of the social legislation of the 1960's that reflected the increased national concern about civil rights, the problems of poverty and cultural minorities. It was recognized that certain children did not seem to benefit much from their exposure to school, and a disproportionate number were children whose parents were poor. The Head Start and Follow Through programs were established to attack this problem. The Follow Through program was intended to "follow through" in grades K-3 with the advantages provided children by their preschool "Head Start" experiences.

The children for whom Follow Through is intended are, therefore, from the same economic and cultural groups as those who were enrolled in Head Start. Nationwide, the program includes Native Americans, Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans, Appalachian Whites and others. These children are served by a total of about 170 projects in urban and rural communities in the 50 States.

Like Head Start, Follow Through is more than an educational program. In broad terms, it is designed to equip children to deal with school in particular and society in general by helping them acquire academic skills, emotional and physical health, social abilities and a sense of self-worth. Thus, the Follow Through program is a comprehensive one in which health and dental care as well as social, nutritional and psychological services are provided. Parents are involved as aides in the classroom, as members of Policy Advisory Committees, and as home tutors, for example. Although Follow Through was originally conceptualized and funded through the Office of Economic Opportunity as part of the "War on Poverty," it has been administered from its beginnings in 1967 through the U.S. Office of Education.

PRINCIPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION

> "Follow Through is an identifiable kind of phenomenon. Other federal government change agent programs seem to disappear like the morning mist. This is largely because they're made up of a lot of people moving around randomly in the system selling ideas or selling packages of materials without any coherent structure. Follow Through, next to all that stuff, stands out in bold relief as an identifiable strategy. It's one of the few things we actually see work, so we can be sure it's there." --Follow Through Consultant

This section briefly highlights a number of features of the Follow Through program that were identified by a wide variety of participants as being in some way important in the implementation process. Some of these features were spelled out in the original conception of Follow Through and others have developed as the experience of Follow Through has unfolded. Participants often spoke about these features as findings or lessons learned from the Follow Through experience that should be communicated to others.

It would probably be too grandiose to think about this set of principles as somehow constituting a theory of educational change embodied in the major characteristics of the Follow Through program, but perhaps it is not too unfair to suggest that the outline or germ of an emergent theory of change may be lurking within this group of lessons learned. A group of lessons drawn together like these suggest the possibilities of discerning some coherence or patterning among the individual lessons. It would not seem profitable to try too hard to shape these patterns into a tightly argued explanation for change, but it may be useful to look informally for connections and relationships that could provide an interesting premise for thinking about how change takes place, partly because the lessons originate from the concerete experiences of persons directly engaged in a process of change. Certainly it was not the intent of the author to construct a theory out of the reported experiences of Follow Through practitioners. This presentation

might be thought of as a worksheet that lays out some information in such a way that others can take it up and apply it to their own situations. This way of formatting the lessons learned in Follow Through may serve the reader as a kind of tool which can be used to stimulate thinking about his/her own experience with educational change. This may also serve to provide a description of the essential features of the Follow Through program as identified by practitioners. The discussion of these features is organized under the following topics:

Parent Participation
Sponsorship
Planned Variation
Research and Development
Trust and Cooperation

Parent Participation

A major element in the Follow Through strategy for change is meaningful parent and community participation in the program. The original guidelines for the program were derived from the Office of Economic Opportunity principles of direct active involvement of poor persons in the programs designed to serve them. Parents of school children are important stakeholders, and as such need to be incorporated into the decisionmaking and operational structures of the school program. Parents serve as the majority representation on policy advisory committees that are required to help prepare each local project's work plan and budget and to oversee the actual conduct of the program. Parents also become involved as employees of the program, as paraprofessional aides in the classroom and in health, nutrition and social services, for example.

One value of parent participation is that the program focus is targeted on the children. The parents' stake in

the education of their own children is obviously much higher than that of anyone else in the system. If the attention of all the people is to be kept focused clearly and firmly on the needs of the children, then the parents need to be involved.

A second reason for parent participation is that the child is in school only a portion of his life and the influence of the home on his development is obviously important. The influence of the parent on the child extends far beyond the influence of the school, so a larger definition of learning has to include the home environment. It follows that if the home environment is brought into the system by which a child learns, the child should benefit.

Parents also play a role as translators or go-betweens, bringing community concerns to the school and school concerns back into the community. They can help make a unified system out of the school-community environment in which the child lives and learns. Parents can also be effective spokesmen for the Follow Through program at the place where effective spokesmen are most needed--at the legislative level. At times when programs like Follow Through have been threatened with being terminated, it has been the parents of Follow Through children who forcefully carried the message to legislative decisionmakers about the benefits of the program and why the program should be continued. Parents can effectively translate educational concerns into political considerations. One Follow Through participant emphasized the role of parents in these words:

> "I think the most important thing that Follow Through has accomplished is learning to deal with school systems in making the parents aware that they should be interested in and get involved with what is going on in their school so they can bring about effective change. The process of involvement is not just jumping up and saying, 'You're wrong about this, this and this.'--but rather it is knowing the 'how to' skills involved in systematically working with the school system to bring about change."

Sponsorship

The sponsorship concept recognizes that to implement a truly innovative educational program in a public school setting would require immense effort on the part of many people. This kind of change would not just happen on its own; it would have to be sponsored. The sponsor is responsible for developing or adapting a coherent philosophy of education or theory about how children learn. In the case of Follow Through, sponsors with widely different philosophical approaches to early childhood education are represented. Some utilize behavior modification theories, others advocate child-centered open education philosophies, and others take a Piagetian-based developmental approach to early learning. The philosophy of some sponsors emphasizes the parents' role in the direct education of their children and that of others emphasizes the role of parents in the administrative decisionmaking aspects of the program.

Although different philosophies are represented among different Follow Through sponsors, each sponsor's program is drawn from an interrelated set of principles about how best to help children learn. Sponsors have been responsible for explicating the implications of their chosen philosophy for the day-to-day operation of the educational enterprise by developing materials and training procedures and providing sustained comprehensive technical assistance for local communities trying to implement the approaches. They have also exercised a quality control and feedback function to monitor the impact of the procedures they develop and advocate. In all of this sponsors have acted as agents of change located outside of the local school districts' day-to-day operations, but they have also been involved in and held accountable to those daily activities in systematic, demanding ways that make their role much more that of the insider than the typical state department of education, school of education or consultant. The importance of an outside force that has a continuing relationship with the insiders is emphasized by one participant:

> "The most important dimension of change is the modification of human interactions. And any organization such as a public school needs the external relationship with a sponsor (or some other force) to enable its personnel to maintain a focus on the interactions between teacher and child, parent and child, teacher and teacher assistant, principal and teacher and home visitor and parent."

In Follow Through, each of the 22 sponsor organizations consists of a director and a staff with functional roles such as program and materials development, training, evaluation and administrative services. Sponsors are located within colleges or universities, federally supported research and development laboratories and independent educational organizations. The size of sponsoring organizations varies from as many as about 50 staff members to as few as about five staff members, depending primarily on the number of community sites associated with each sponsor. Some sponsors work with only one community, some work with as many as 20. Follow Through communities as well as sponsors are diverse, for participating local communities are located throughout all the 50 states in widely contrasting ethnic and geographic settings. Despite this diversity, sponsors and communities have been connected to one another in a way that has made it difficult for either to unilaterally dissolve the relationship. In the words of a sponsor:

> "The fundamental rock that became absolutely critical was that we were tied to that school district and they were tied to us. Even if they wanted to change sponsors, that didn't happen. No matter how sick we may have gotten over a particular school district or how sick they got over us, we had to live through a cycle of relationships that allowed change to occur in both parties. That lacing together was critical."

Perhaps the most important lesson learned in Follow Through is that it is essential to develop a sustained two-way flow of information and influence between the sponsoring

organization and the local educational community. The implementation process is characterized by adjustment and adaptation procedures which are influenced by both 1) strong guiding principles laid down by the sponsor staff who are operating within parameters defined by the theoretical program approach or blueprint, and 2) feedback from concrete field experience based in the real world of local communities. The sponsorship process is built on a two-part commitment: one part is a commitment to abstractions which are embodied in the principles and theories of the sponsor approach; the other part is a commitment to down-to-earth field realities, which are embodied in the daily experiences of individual persons as they go about their work. The strength of sponsorship as a strategy for change lies in the fact that power can be exercised by both the sponsor, guided by the blueprint for the approach, and by the local community, guided by the day-to-day realities. Sponsorship is an invention or a device that permits the power from these two sources to work in concert, at least much of the time, rather than in opposition. Action can thus be mutually supportive rather than antagonistic, and there is the potential for a cooperative relationship between the change agent and the local community rather than an adversary one. Fundamental to the sponsorship concept is this two-way interaction or translation process that connects the sponsor's guiding framework for program design with the actual practices of ongoing operational educational settings.

> "If you sit in an ivory tower and develop something, it's very apt to be useless. It's important to keep in contact with the grass roots because that's where it's at. We can go off kite flying with our jargon and our esoteric ideas, but if it isn't brought back down to earth it's not worth much."

Planned Variation

The planned variation ethic is based on the premise that there is no one best way to approach a problem as important, as complex, and as value-laden as the education of a child. Just as there are different children, different cultural settings in which these children live, different value systems by which their parents live, there are different ways for children to be educated. This is an idea that is very close to the anthropological concept of cultural relativism--for it implies a great deal of respect for different human ways of carrying out the human experience. Planned variation in Follow Through recognizes that there is no single educational approach that has proven itself successful for all the variety of local American circumstances. The U. S. Office of Education has encouraged 22 distinct educational approaches in Follow Through, each with its own sponsor. This has meant that local communities could choose from among various alternative approaches the one which best fit their specific local needs.

The idea that all the complex problems facing early childhood education might not be solved with a single best way has not been easy for all educators to accept, especially some of those responsible for designing other federal intervention programs. A prominent style of thinking in education has led program designers to search for the one best educational program. Follow Through departed from this tradition in education with its focus on planned variation with different sponsors promoting various approaches to the problems of early childhood education. The U.S. Office of Education administrators in charge of Follow Through have had to employ a perspective like cultural relativism in their dealings with various Follow Through sponsors, respecting the integrity of each approach while favoring none over the others. The anthropologists' familiarity with the concept of cultural relativism and its implications helps one to appreciate how difficult and how important the

U.S. Office of Education's role has been in defining the concept of planned variation and then in acting to support its achievement in the real world.

The perspective of cultural relativism holds that each culture makes sense in its own terms to persons who are native to that culture, and it is inappropriate to apply the standards of one culture to judge the worth or efficiency of another culture. To apply this to the concept of planned variation in the Follow Through setting is to say that each of the 22 different sponsor approaches makes sense in its own terms, and it is inappropriate to judge an open classroom approach, for example, with the standards applied to evaluating the impact of a behaviorist approach. In Follow Through the attempt has been made to encourage the evaluation of the program from a variety of perspectives. For example, each sponsor has had funding for the documentation and evaluation of its own program, some local communities have had resources for independent evaluations, and the national evaluation has utilized several contractors and supported a number of different evaluation strategies. Many Follow Through participants believe, however, that an undue emphasis has been placed on the outcomes of standardized achievement tests, and that in the final analysis the single standard of these test scores will be used to judge the worth of all the varied Follow Through programs. The controversies and complexities of the evaluation issues underscore the lessons learned about how difficult it is to fully carry out the planned variation ethic.

Research and Development

The research and development ethic is founded on the assumption that the answers to all the questions about early school learning are not known. The whole Follow Through enterprise has been deeply rooted in the spirit

of inquiry. Questions are raised and answers are sought as an integral part of carrying out the program day to day. Procedures are established and tried out based on the best information available. In the try-out phase additional information is collected and analyzed to determine what impact the procedures have; their effects are monitored and then revisions are made based on the monitoring information. Once revisions are made there must be a willingness to go back to the first part of the cycle and try out the revised procedures all over again with the monitoring system still in place and with the sure knowledge that the right answer probably can't be known altogether--that continual revisions will be necessary. A research and development ethic essentially calls for a commitment to continual improvement and thus to continual change, for the one right way simply doesn't exist. In other words, the whole educational process is conceptualized as one that requires the continual renewal of the research and development cycle of trying things out, monitoring to see what the effects of the try-out are, revising on the basis of the information gained in monitoring, then going back to try it out again.

This research and development cycle in Follow Through has been shaped by the fact that the sponsor organizations have been responsible both for delivery of services to local communities and for research and development. Each sponsor has worked with the same local communities since they joined the Follow Through program. (The earliest sponsor-community relationships were established in 1968-69. Other sponsors and communities joined Follow Through in the next two years.) This has provided a long time period extending over several years for the exercise of the research and development cycle. One participant pointed out:

> "We sponsors have been able to stay in contact with local community people long enough to reach levels and depths of complexity in articulating our program that other people haven't been able to get to before. We've had the time to do it."

The research and development process has also been characterized by the shared two-way flow of information and influence between the sponsors and the local communities. Those involved in the Follow Through experience have emphasized how important it is for the research and development process to be carried out in such a way that both outside sponsors with coherent philosophical positions and local communities with practical operational responsibilities are continuously involved in a long-term relationship.

Trust and Cooperation

> "A study of Follow Through has to come out of a study of the people. It has to come out talking about the people. It can't come out talking about the program and that kind of stuff, because we are not a program. We're people."

Human qualities like trust and cooperation underlie the formal organizational structure of any educational program. The people are what make the program work. In many different contexts and in many different ways the lesson was expressed that when people trusted one another and could cooperatively work together, the program got implemented. It is difficult to write cogently about these human qualities in the diction of the conventional report, but participants in Follow Through emphasized so strongly the importance of the human elements, that it would seriously distort the meaning of Follow Through to present this lesson in terms that are too abstract. Therefore, the attempt is made here to tell the story of how these human qualities have influenced implementation in the direct words of a participant. This section is drawn from a taped interview with an administrator, a local Follow Through project director, who saw her major responsibilities for program implementation in terms of creating and supporting a climate of trust and cooperation.

It is important to keep in mind that each person quoted here is speaking from their own experience. Specific details about a community or a sponsor's approach, etc., that appear in these quotations should not be construed to be "representative" in any sense of the total Follow Through experience. For example, in this section the person quoted describes her experience with a particular sponsor. As part of planned variation many sponsoring organizations have participated in Follow Through, each with different philosophies of education and different implementation strategies. The important point in this section is the description of the human qualities of trust and cooperation. These qualities were emphasized in one way or another across all the variations of program philosophy, geography and ethnicity. This example describes one path by which trust and cooperation have been pursued in Follow Through. The major lesson of planned variation reminds us that there are many paths.

This then, is a local Follow Through director talking about the influence of one of the sponsors on her:

> "After 18 years of teaching, what the sponsor did was open up my mind and take those shackles off. It let me get with it, do my thing; and it opened up all sorts of possibilities. And it taught me to raise questions. I liked what I got from them because it gave me background for what we're trying to do here in this community.
>
> "There is no way to really tell anybody what the sponsor's training was like; you've got to be there. You've got to experience yourself not being concerned about taking notes and reading a bunch of assignments and being checked in and out of class and all these types of things that were so important before. You did it because you wanted to--you wanted to learn more--and everybody shared everything. There were no grades, so there was no competition for grades. It was tremendous--and that's what we're trying to do here: instill in these kids the love of learning and forget about how the restrictions operate or doing exactly what the teacher wants only because

> the teacher wants it. It was really a good place to be and we really worked. We attended things at night and did all kinds of things that we didn't have to do. We did more than we would ever have done if we were forced to."

And now she is trying to carry what she learned from this experience with a sponsor into the present context, an elementary school in a small town. One way she does this is to "treat teachers as competent professionals." And how do you get teachers to believe that they are going to be treated as competent professionals?

> "Trust them. One of our oldest teachers here said, 'You know, it's fun to be here this year. Neither you nor the principal look at me when I'm downstairs and wonder why I'm not in my room.'
>
> "I just assume that when they are doing something, whatever they are doing, that that's just what's to be done. Same way in attending to a time schedule. We don't check them to see if they are in their room at a certain time, or that they leave the building at a certain time. If they have something that has to be done, they do it. Consequently, they probably spend more time here now than they ever did."

This Follow Through director is trying to encourage a climate among the teachers on her staff that she experienced in a sponsor's program. She offers an example of what can happen when this climate prevails:

> "We have teachers who go to the library with their kids three days a week--every single day all summer long. They read with the kids, talk with them, sit with the kids while they are reading. Just encouraging the kids to read. Nobody told them they had to do that. They don't get paid to do it. They care for their kids. I wasn't even aware that they were doing it last year--after I heard about it I looked into it. I think that is quite a tribute to the teachers. That's the type thing we are doing. Nobody said they have to do it. Because they are the good teachers that they are, they <u>want</u> to do it.

> These are the extra things. I don't think these things would happen if the teachers didn't really feel good about the school--didn't feel that they are professionals and treated that way."

There are other extra things. In the summer teachers spend from one to four weeks working on the curriculum--"To decide what it is we want to teach these kids." All the teachers participate: "Every teacher is signed up for it. There was no coercion to do it at all. We just said we need these things, what can we do about it? Now everybody's signed up to work." The sessions are not structured in a traditional sense. "We don't structure things because as soon as a session is structured it becomes my idea or someone's idea." Of course there is structure, but it is based on a different principle than that of having one person lay out all the details of a work schedule and having everyone else carry out the plan made up for them. The structure this Follow Through director is talking about is based on the principles of trust and cooperation. For example, if a new teacher comes into Follow Through:

> "I think the work before school starts is very important. But I would let the other teachers do the training. I would just allow some time before school started for an experienced teacher to get with that new teacher and that would be the end of my structuring. The teachers would take it from there. Just give them the time. I think it rings a lot truer when you have a teacher talking to a teacher than if I were to give instructions on how to do things. If I did that, they would then say, 'Sure, you sit up there in the office and it's easy for you to say how to do it.'
>
> "For training it is crucial that you have a teacher dedicated to what they are really trying to do. There are all kinds of teachers that could do it. Almost every teacher we have here could do it...I'm big on using the best we have as trainers. I think it improves the best we've got. The best is improved by that.

> If nothing else, it's a pat on the back to say, 'We think you're good enough to do this.'
>
> "A pat on the back is most important. We have real good teachers--they are willing to learn, they are willing to do in-service, they'll work on Saturdays, they'll do almost anything to become better. All you have to do is support that attitude."

This section addresses a major point about Follow Through implementation--that underneath this whole Follow Through enterprise is the basic structural support provided by individual human beings carrying out their tasks, living their lives, being, in short, "persons," with all that implies for the potential of grandeur and the potential of crippling, but humanly understandable, limitations.

In this section a Follow Through participant talks about one of the more grand (if illusive) human potentials--trust, and its concomitant, cooperation, and shows how it can be actively promoted and can be, in fact, manifest in the operation of a school. The organizational structures of the program--parent participation, sponsorship, planned variation, research and development--are but empty shells without the constructive support of human qualities like trust and cooperation. Underlying the organizational structures are the human structures. There are many different ways to pursue the goals of trust and cooperation, and many ways in which these qualities can be expressed. But throughout Follow Through the lesson was emphasized: Programs work because people work together.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND PERSPECTIVES

This section briefly recounts the methods used to research the lessons learned in Follow Through. This was one component of a larger descriptive study of Follow Through implementation processes. The purpose of this study was to document selected aspects of the Follow Through program that would be useful for others. Rather than trying to identify the target audience for the report in terms of specific role positions such as state or local school administrators, a number of assumptions about the characteristics of the potential audience were identified. The principal assumptions about the audience were:

(a) they are interested in changing schools;

(b) they know little about Follow Through;

(c) they know little about alternative approaches for early childhood education;

(d) they have limited experience with innovative training methods;

(e) they will be cautious about outside intervention; and

(f) they will underestimate the difficulty and cost of program implementation.

A major issue for presenting information to readers with these characteristics is whether the study would be seen as basically descriptive or evaluative; the question is whether a descriptive study of implementation is possible without implicitly assuming an evaluative role. The research staff's perspective was that this study should try to describe the procedures used in Follow Through and it should not attempt to make judgments as to which strategies are the most effective. It was recognized, however, that any potential audience would want some kind of indication as to the effectiveness of various procedures or strategies employed to install and maintain an innovative educational program. It was suggested that statements by participants

themselves--sponsors, parents, school staff, etc.--could be relied upon as a means of reporting this effectiveness and that such statements would sufficiently meet the needs of those interested in the degree of effectiveness. As one consultant pointed out:

> "If we're going to try to say something about what has worked and what hasn't, that doesn't necessarily force us into a big program of classroom observation or anything of that kind. We really can rely on some descriptive statements from the people who've been involved about what worked and what didn't work."

It was from this kind of thinking that the lessons learned from Follow Through became a component of the research study.

This research project was begun with an information base gained from previous experiences with the Follow Through program. The author has served as the liaison between each sponsor organization and Stanford Research Institute, which was conducting the national evaluation of Follow Through. In a previous project at Nero and Associates, sponsor-produced materials like theoretical position papers, training manuals and evaluation instruments were collected into a library and described. For the two-year implementation study, five researchers conducted field visitations at 13 different sponsor headquarters and one local community for each sponsor. Open-ended interviews were held with about 300 people from different role positions, such as administrators, trainers, parents and teachers about how things get done in Follow Through, and seminars were conducted with participants about the lessons learned from their Follow Through experiences. Most of these interviews and seminars were recorded and approximately 100 hours of tape were transcribed, providing a data base expressed in the words of the participants themselves.

As background preparation for the field visits and interviews, a reference library on Follow Through implementation was compiled. The project staff identified

references in the Follow Through Materials Library (a collection of 1,500 items resulting from a previous Materials Review contract) that would provide specific information on sponsor implementation activities. These and other documents on Follow Through were organized into an indexed resource library for the implementation study. Sponsor proposals describing sponsor delivery systems were also acquired and indexed.

An Advisory Committee representing sponsoring organizations, local communities and consultants with extensive experience in Follow Through was convened for a two-day conference to advise the project staff on the development of a conceptual outline for the implementation study and on procedures to use in collecting data for the final report.

Following the Advisory Committee meeting, a guide to data collection was prepared. Questions were framed relating to each of the major topics suggested in the Advisory Committee meeting. The research staff worked with consultants and selected Follow Through participants refining and organizing these questions into a data collection guide. This guide had two basic sections. One listed questions and provided space for answers that could be derived from written sources in the Follow Through Materials Review Library, such as sponsor proposals. The other section was a series of interview and seminar questions that were asked during field visits. Before the main data collection effort the project staff visited two sponsors and one community to assess the appropriateness of the preliminary guide and its usefulness in collecting clear descriptive information. The data collection guides were refined in light of the experience gained in these field tests and they also provided the opportunity to collect substantive information for the report from the locations visited. Concurrent with the work on the preliminary data collection guide, an introduction to the study was prepared which

would help orient persons in the field who would be working with the project in field data collection. This introduction outlined what the project staff planned to describe about Follow Through implementation, how the information would be collected, and provided a sample of what the finished report would look like.

The next phase of the study was the data collection in the field. The general pattern of work which was followed in conducting the field research is outlined in the following discussion. The same general flow of activities was followed for visits to both local communities and sponsor headquarters. The project distributed the "Introduction to the Implementation Study" prior to field visits. In planning a specific visit the first step was a telephone call to mutually work out the most favorable time for a visit. Details about scheduling and conducting the field interviews, seminars and observations were worked out cooperatively with relevant members of the local visitation site. They were asked to help identify persons to participate in the study and to suggest places and times to meet that caused as little disruption in local routines as possible. Before the field visit an information base had been gained by reviewing the sponsor proposals and other relevant documents which are in the Follow Through Materials Library. The sponsors were asked to suggest other materials that would help the project staff. Using what had been learned from these written materials, initial telephone conferences, and the interview guides, a draft agenda was prepared for each visit. Before each visit individualized interview outlines were also prepared to guide the project staff's questions. As much was expected to be learned from a wide-ranging exploration of the topics with people in the field, formal standardized interview schedules were not used. A concern, however, was that data collected from various persons be usable for making comparisons and generating summary statements, so the open-ended interviews did incorporate parallel elements.

The project staff tried to arrive at the field data collection site with as much advance preparation accomplished as possible. While in the field the staff tried to adapt themselves to local conventions, while still efficiently using time to talk with people, observe activities, and produce good working notes and records. The project staff talked with people with a wide variety of perspectives regarding topics of interest, and were especially interested in persons with direct "hands on" operational responsibilities. For purposes of vivid descriptions, observations were made of certain on-going activities. For example, sometimes a visit was scheduled during a training session so that there would be an opportunity for unobtrusive observation as well as interviewing. Immediately upon returning from a visit, the project staff reviewed the notes and tapes produced while in the field and started the process of transcribing taped interviews into written form. This involved logging for the typist the appropriate sections to be transcribed, and annotating the completed transcripts to insure a correct rendering of the conversations. A data management system was developed which included a filing system for typed transcripts, an index to their content, and selected quotations from the transcripts were placed on 5 x 8 cards organized under topic headings that were to be in the report. These transcripts, combined with the data collected from written documents and other notes made by field visitors, constitute the basic data source for the implementation report.

The last phase of the study involved writing a draft report for review by Follow Through participants and completing the final report in light of the reviewers' reactions. The information from the data collection phase was distilled and organized into a narrative draft which was circulated to all sponsors, advisory committee members, selected local community staff, selected consultants and the U. S. Office of Education. The comments from this intensive review formed the basis for revisions prior to the submission of

the final report. These revisions focused on refining the content of the report and improving its form and readability. The oral and written feedback from reviewers constituted an important resource in this revision process.

The data collection process and the final report were organized around four major topics common to the experience of all Follow Through sponsors and communities:

1) research and development;
2) sponsor staff development;
3) training for the local site; and
4) monitoring and evaluation.

Each of these areas constituted a major topic for the collection of data and the description of sponsor implementation activities. Within each major topic area of sponsor activity was a series of questions that were intended to give five kinds of information.

1) What activities are carried out?
2) How are these activities carried out?
3) Why are these activities carried out?
4) How have these activities changed over time?
5) What lessons have been learned in Follow Through that could be useful to future efforts to implement educational programs?

In determining "what activities are carried out," the intent was to provide a vivid, concrete description of what activities are undertaken to implement a model. In "how it is carried out," the interest was in the organizational aspects of these activities: who plans, carries out and supervises the activities; and what are the mechanisms by which the activities occur? In addition to a description of what is going on and how it gets that way, the interest was in "why it is done that way;" what are the reasons for these particular activities being carried out in these specific ways? For all of these questions the concern was with

the changes that have occurred over time, to find out if the present practices and rationales for them have undergone any changes since Follow Through began, and if so, why did each change occur? Another aspect of this concern for establishing how changes have occurred over time and what lessons have been learned revolves around the following question: In some ideal world, if there were the opportunity to implement a model program with new communities, (a) what are the conditions that would best facilitate development of that new program, and (b) given those conditions, what procedures would best be used to implement this future program?

The research procedures focused on the discussion of the lessons sponsors and others report that they have learned about implementation procedures as a result of their involvement in the Follow Through program. Although it would have been possible to derive some of these lessons from written descriptions of sponsor implementation strategies, by far the most vital source of this kind of data was the direct, first-hand reports of Follow Through participants. Consequently, it was the intention of the research staff to rely on the statements of sponsors, project site staff, and others closely involved in Follow Through implementation as to the lessons learned.

The most productive strategy for collecting data on the lessons learned focused on open-ended interviews with individual practitioners and especially on group seminars. A group of persons that held various role positions in Follow Through, such as administrators, trainers, teachers and parents would meet together in an informal seminar-like setting to talk about what they had learned from their Follow Through experiences. The field researcher would lead the seminar session in such a way as to promote a free-flowing open-ended exploration of questions such as the following:

Imagine that a person responsible for planning a new educational program comes to you to ask your advice on how to design guidelines for the new program. Based on what you've learned in Follow Through:

How would you describe the main features of a program that influence implementation?

What makes each feature important?

What features are worth keeping intact?

What should be modified or refined?

What should be discarded altogether because it doesn't work?

When asked to give a brief description of Follow Through by someone unfamiliar with the program, what features of the program do you talk about? What analogies do you use, what key stories are told, what charts are drawn, etc.?

After trying to describe the Follow Through program to various audiences over the last several years, what have you learned about making the essential features of Follow Through implementation understandable to others?

What elements could be taken away from Follow Through implementation and yet retain a viable educational change program? What are the key features--the essential features?

How do you explain or account for the impact of Follow Through on the educational enterprise in Follow Through communities?

How should we present information about Follow Through to others? (Format, diction, etc.)

What aspects of the educational scene do you <u>want</u> to have control over? e.g.,

- classrooms
- school buildings
- school districts
- communities
- teacher training institutions
- state departments of education
- federal agencies
- others

What, in fact, do you have control over?

What have you found impossible to control?

If you were to undertake related educational activities in a new setting:

What conditions do you consider essential for successful implementation?

What conditions do you consider facilitating but not essential?

What conditions do you consider a hindrance to implementation?

What conditions would be certain to cause failure?

Is there anything that we have left out of the description of your program or the lessons learned that you think should be incorporated?

These seminars sometimes had several persons from the same or closely related role positions, such as a group of teachers and paraprofessional teaching assistants, and these could be as productive as those with widely varying role positions represented. The seminars sometimes lasted for about an hour, but more typically were two to three hours in length. It was often after the first hour that the group warmed fully to the task and the most useful information was developed. The groups ranged in size from two or three up to about 25, but most sessions were with five to ten persons.

In the visits to the 13 sponsor homeshop organizations we typically met in the seminar format two or three times, with persons with different role positions at each. Usually one seminar session was held with those connected to the training function, such as those who design and carry out training workshops and produce training materials. Another seminar was sometimes held with those associated with the monitoring or evaluation function. Almost always there was at least one seminar with people drawn from different role positions, such as administrators, materials developers, trainers and evaluators. Seminars were also held in each

of the 13 local communities visited, one associated with each sponsor. Several persons from the same role position, such as parent members of the Policy Advisory Council (PAC), would often meet together. Members of classroom teaching staffs often comprised seminar groups. Seminars with persons from various role positions usually included persons such as the local project director, the superintendent or someone else from the district central office, a principal, a local trainer, a teacher, a family outreach worker, a parent, and sometimes someone like a nurse or librarian.

Participants in these seminars often remarked to the researchers that the opportunity to look at their own operations in this kind of setting was exciting and productive. They often were led to see implications of their operations through their shared exploration of these questions which were aimed at a level of generalization considerably more abstract than their typical day-to-day interchanges. The sessions served for the participants as an opportunity to take stock of where they had come from and to do some thinking from a long-range planning perspective about where this might take them. In this sense, the lessons seminar format could be viewed as having potential for an on-line management tool for program participants as well as being viewed as a component of a social science documentation effort.

This approach to studying educational programs is influenced by perspectives and procedures that can be identified with a number of intellectual disciplines, principally business management, ordinary language philosophy, oral history and anthropology. From business management comes the perspective that a kind of pragmatic planning and decision making can contribute to the achievement of educational research goals. There is the recognition that in the world of day-to-day pressures there is much virtue in simply getting on with the business at hand,

given what you know and have at this moment, and being willing to change and adapt as problems inevitably occur.

From ordinary language philosophy there comes a mixed attitude of restrained skepticism and profound respect toward the capabilities of everyday language. On the one hand, the mechanics of producing and making sense of everyday linguistic utterances are so little understood by specialists that to rely on language for scientific enterprises is at most a dubious practice. On the other hand, these everyday utterances have served as the chief means for recording, manipulating and transmitting human knowledge (at least until very recently). Despite the quibbles and questions about the adequacy of ordinary language to communicate "truth", it is also the chief language used in the conduct of the educational enterprise which was, after all, the object of this inquiry.

From oral history comes support for our basic faith as human beings carrying out research that other human beings (the program participants) can and will speak truthfully and cogently about their experiences, and that yet other human beings (the readers) can learn from this speech once it is re-organized and transposed into a non-technical written form. Like oral history, this approach provides documentation of the perceptions of those who are directly involved in the change process while they are still active in it.

Like anthropology, this approach holds that important knowledge about human affairs can be gained by observing those affairs in their natural setting and by interviewing participants about what is going on. One of the important tools for accomplishing this is the comparative method in which cultural features from one natural setting are compared to features from other settings. Using concepts like culture and social structure, anthropologists try to organize their own perceptions and those of participants into a coherent account that makes the phenomena under study

somehow understandable. In this study we have visited people in the places where they live and work and have talked to them about their lives and jobs. In the effort to understand what can be known about producing change in schools, sponsors and communities have been compared to each other to try to discern what cultural and social structural regularities are operating in the sponsored relationships with local schools.

In our interviews and observations we are like the anthropologist who concerns himself with trying to determine what is standard operating procedure for the people in the setting he is observing. Much of this standard operating procedure is not codified, articulated or written down. Some of it is so taken for granted by participants that it is invisible to them. The concept of culture has been likened to the image of water being invisible to the fish. Culture is the medium in which human affairs take place, just as water is the medium in which ichthyological affairs take place. Thus, anthropologists in their efforts to describe cultural phenomena sometimes appear to be concerned with matters that are obvious or taken for granted. Often it is just these matters that are so obvious and taken for granted by insiders that can be importantly illuminating to outsiders. In the case of this study, experienced Follow Through practitioners (the insiders) may be taking for granted many standard operating procedures that could be useful for others outside the Follow Through context who are now designing or starting the process of implementing innovative educational programs. It is important to try to document what has been learned by those who have experienced first-hand the frustrations and accomplishments of trying to change schools.

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APPENDIX

Follow Through Sponsor Organizations

AFRAM PARENT IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH
AFRAM Associates, Inc.
68-72 East 131st Street
Harlem, New York 10037

BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS APPROACH
University of Kansas
Support and Development Center for Follow Through
Department of Human Development
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

CALIFORNIA PROCESS MODEL
California State Department of Education
Division of Compensatory Education
Bureau of Program Development
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95814

COGNITIVELY ORIENTED CURRICULUM MODEL
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
125 N. Huron Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

CULTURALLY DEMOCRATIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
University of California at Santa Cruz
Social Science Building, Room 25
Santa Cruz, California 95064

CULTURAL LINGUISTIC APPROACH
Northeastern Illinois State College
Center for Inner City Studies
700 E. Oakwood Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60653

DEVELOPMENTAL-INTERACTION APPROACH
Bank Street College of Education
610 West 112th Street
New York, New York 10025

EDC OPEN EDUCATION PROGRAM
Education Development Center
55 Chapel Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02160

FLORIDA PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM
University of Florida
Institute for Development of Human Resources (IDHR)
Florida Educational R&D Council
College of Education
520 Weil Hall
Gainesville, Florida 32611

HAMPTON INSTITUTE NONGRADED MODEL
Hampton Institute
Department of Elementary Education
Hampton, Virginia 23368

HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MODEL
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

INDIVIDUALIZED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM
University of Pittsburgh
Learning Research and Development Center
Bellefield Building
160 North Craig Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

INTERDEPENDENT LEARNING MODEL
City University of New York
The Graduate School and University Center of the
City University of New York
33 West 42nd Street
New York, New York 10036

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (BILINGUAL) APPROACH
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
Division of Field Relations and Follow Through
800 Brazos Street
Austin, Texas 78701

MATHEMAGENIC ACTIVITIES PROGRAM
University of Georgia
229 Psychology Building
Athens, Georgia 30602

THE NEW SCHOOL APPROACH TO FOLLOW THROUGH
University of North Dakota
Center for Teaching and Learning
Box 8039, University Station
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201

PARENT SUPPORTED APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOR ORIENTED
PRESCRIPTIVE TEACHING APPROACH
Georgia State University
Department of Early Childhood
33 Gilmer Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM
Far West Laboratory for Educational Research & Development
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103

PRENTICE-HALL LEARNING SYSTEMS
Prentice-Hall Learning Systems, Inc.
200 Sylvan Avenue
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

ROLE TRADE MODEL
Western Behavioral Sciences Institute
1150 Silverado
La Jolla, California 92037

TUCSON EARLY EDUCATION MODEL
University of Arizona
Arizona Center for Early Childhood Education
1515 East First Street
Tucson, Arizona 85721

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON ENGELMANN/BECKER MODEL FOR DIRECT INSTRUCTION
University of Oregon Follow Through Program
Department of Special Education
Eugene, Oregon 97403

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NOTE: This is a selective list of references that deal with the Follow Through program itself or with more general educational issues in a manner that importantly influenced this paper. In addition to these references, the national evaluation of Follow Through has been producing a series of

technical reports under contract with Stanford Research Institute of Menlo Park, California and Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The classroom observation studies of Jane Stallings at Stanford Research Institute address implementation issues. More information about the national evaluation results and other aspects of the Follow Through program can be obtained from:

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